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AUTHOR Schuelke, L. D.
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a model for improving a learning transaction between teacher and student. Included with the model is an actual sample learning module in communication theory offered at Governors State University, Forest Park, Illinois. (Author)

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A NEW MODEL FOR IMPROVING THE COMMUNICATION OF LEARNING IN COMMUNICATION

by

L. D. Schuelke
College of Human Learning and Development
Governors State University
Park Forest South, Illinois 60466

International Communication Association
Atlanta, Georgia
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CS 500 008

Mal MacLean has asked us to "New-Think" about Communication and Learning. In the light of experience this seems to be a reasonable request. The communication of knowledge through traditional systems has been disjointed with what seems to be a wide variance of model communication behavior on the part of teachers in general and teachers of communication in particular.

Ned Flanders (1960), Edmund Amidon (1966), Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman, and Smith (1966), have all firmly established the incisive role of communication variables (as modeled by the teacher) as important in the learning process. Karl Robinson (1954) identified the importance of the speech model that the speech teacher demonstrates. His general comments were reiterated and extended by Lewis, Everett, Gibson, and Schoen (1969) in their book entitled Teaching Speech.

If we accept the premise that the communication of the teacher is a model for the student, the question of communication clarity and specificity with regard to teacher-student transactions becomes important for consideration by every teacher and, specifically, teachers of communication.

As a pilot project, the faculty in Communication Science at Governors State University have originated the following model for building better communication between professors and students.

Model for Preparation of Learning Modules

1.0 Title

2.0 Catalog Description: A brief description for use in the University and/or College catalog.

3.0 Rationale: A stated purpose for the module; how is this module relevant to the student's needs and competencies expected in a particular program; why is it important to have this module.

4.0 Procedure: A description of how the module will be conducted, setting, techniques used, special requirements regarding time and placement experience, general format of schedule or how objectives will be achieved, etc.

5.0 Performance Objectives:

5.1 General objectives: The objectives to be placed on the transcript.

5.2 Specific objectives: The specific objectives that must be accomplished to satisfy requirements of the general objective.

Specific objectives should include:

5.2.1 What the learner will be doing as he achieves the objective

5.2.2 Identification of given conditions wherein the performance takes place.

5.2.3 What are the criteria for successful completion of the objective.

6.0 Overall Assessment: Pre and post indices of change on the part of students and faculty involved in the module; i.e., data to assess the effectiveness of the module and the learning experiences involved.

7.0 Learning Experiences: The specific learning experiences that will be a part of the module such as, demonstrations, video tapes, seminars, coop ed. assignments, observational experiences, self-instruction, programmed materials, etc. Specific schedules may be outlined.

8.0 Materials and Media:

8.1 Audio tapes to be used
8.2 Video tapes to be used
8.3 Overhead transparencies
8.4 Slides
8.5 Readings, bibliography, text books, etc.
8.6 _____

A typical module of learning communication science is the following in Communication Theory:

Coordinator: Dr. L. David Schuelke

Institution: Governors State University

Module Title: Communication Science: Theory*

Target Group: Juniors, Seniors, and Graduate Students

Description

Communication Science theories, processes, and principles will be examined through an analysis of models, theory, and empirical research within communication settings in platform, dyad, group, media, graphic and therapy contexts. Factors such as verbal and nonverbal communication, intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, mass, and intercultural communication, oral and written modalities; intentional and unintentional messages; man, machine, and animal communication systems; content, medium, and delivery; sender and receiver; and logical emotional content will be some of the parameters of study. It is intended that this portion of the module precede: Communication Science: Research.

Rationale

Many people tend to view communication as a panacea for social, political, organizational, and interpersonal ills. Although many human problems may, in fact, be traced to failures in communication, incorrect interpretation of messages, and overcommunication; there is a considerably larger body of problems which are due to ideological, moral, and managerial conflicts.

This module is intended to provide participants with the theories, processes, and techniques of communication science, as well as the limitations of the field.

Objectives

1. Students should be able to distinguish between the field of communication as a scholarly discipline, a behavioral science, and a profession. (Smith)

2. Students should be able to list at least ten academic disciplines related to communication and relate each one to the communication event typically studied. (Smith)

Co[redacted]

3. Students should be able to describe communication as a process. (Smith)

4. Students should be able to list the characteristics of communication at four levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group or mass, and intercultural. (Smith)

5. Students should be able to distinguish between internal and external communication. (Smith, Wiesman)

6. Students should be able to summarize and compare and contrast the communication variables presented in Berlo's SMCR diagram, Shannon and Weaver's Informational Processing Model, Westley and MacLean's Mass Communication Model, and Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication. (Smith, Barnlund)

7. Students will be able to define: hypothesis, theory, construct, concept, and principle; and provide examples of each in a communication se Hing. (Marx, Kibler)

8. Students will be able to define and give examples of models according to their structure: iconic, verbal, graphic, and mathematical. (Handler, Kessen, and Bross)

9. Students will be able to define and explain: information, bit, redundancy, channel capacity, and entropy. (Bello)

10. Students will be able to explain why an increase in clarity and number of communication messages does not necessarily solve inter-organizational problems. (Katz and Kahn)

11. Students will be able to compare and contrast the following approaches to the study of communication: communication as culture, as language, as personality development, as human relations, as behavior, and as transmission and reception. (Clevenger and Mathews)

12. Students will be able to define and distinguish between stimulus-substitution and response substitution theories of language acquisition. (Williams)

13. Students will describe a mediational account of language and distinguish it from behaviorist accounts. (Williams)

14. Students will describe the concept of linguistic knowledge and relate it to the acquisition of language. (Williams)

15. Students will distinguish between psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic views of verbal development. (Williams)

16. Students will define dialect as a sociolinguistic phenomenon and give examples. (Williams, Smith)

17. Students will give and describe five examples of Black dialect features. (Baratz, Smith)

18. Students will provide examples of "restricted" and "elaborated" language codes. (Bernstein)

19. Students will list and describe four of the six stages of language acquisition. (Labov)

20. Students will define information and specify the circumstances in which information is acquired. (McCroskey)

21. Students will define diffusion and describe the type of motivational characteristics that a source may have when engaging in diffusion. (McCroskey)

22. Students will explain the concept of "multi-step flow" and describe how it operates in an actual, real-life diffusion of information condition. (McCroskey)

23. Students will define "selective exposure" and give examples of implications for communication research. (Katz)

24. Students will define in writing the terms "homophily" and "heterophily" as they relate to mass communication research. (Rogers and Bhowmik)

25. Students will provide examples of one of the major findings of persuasion research concerned with the following parameters: antecedent factors, input factors, mediating factors, and output factors. (Simons)

26. Students will differentiate the reception contexts of print and electronic media. (Kernan, Dommermuth, and Sommers)

27. Students will define the general parameters of speech and hearing including the gross anatomy of the vocal and hearing mechanism, respiration, phonation, resonation, and articulation. (Clevenger and Matthews)

28. Students will define psychophysiological research, list five communication settings in which psychosiological research has been conducted, and cite one finding in each setting. (Behnke)

29. Students will differentiate between process and product effects of communication research. (Clevenger and Matthews)

30. Students will distinguish between observable and non-observable phenomena. (Cegala)

31. Students will define in writing validity, reliability, correlation, and explain negative, positive, and zero correlations. (Cegala and Williams)

32. Students will name and describe in writing for each domain or human behavior, two methods for measuring communication effects in real-life situations. (Cegala)

33. Students will list and discuss the uses of six types of instruments that measure the effects of communication. (Clevenger)

34. Students will compare and contrast in writing the four techniques of measuring attitudes in terms of (a) scales, (b) scoring, and (c) assumptions about scaling. (Zimbardo and Ebbesen)

35. Students will be able to identify at least six of the following communication researcher/theorists by the major focus of their individual work and the theoretical framework from which they operate:

Wilbur Schramm
Wendell Johnson
Charles Van Riper
Curtis MacDougall
Ray Birdwhistell
Marshall McLuhan
Richard A. Gardner
Charles Osgood
Alfred Korzybski
Milton Rokeach
Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld
Leon Festinger
Noam Chomsky
D.O. Hebb
Benjamin Whorf
Robert P. Abelson
Aristotle
Malcom S. MacLean, Jr.
Edward T. Hall
Harry C. Triandis
Robert Bales
Harold D. Lasswell

36. Students will explain the scientific method as it may apply to communication and discuss the nature of the communication experiment. (Brooks, Kibler, and Bowers)

37. Students will define "variable" and differentiate among the types of variables. (Kibler)

38. Students will differentiate research and statistical hypotheses and write a typical null hypothesis relating to possible research in communication science. (Kibler)

39. Students will provide operational definitions of the terms of their original null hypothesis. (Kibler)

Pre and Post-Assessment

An information record will be made by each student to provide biographic data on past experience, training, and personal objectives in the field of communication science.

Students will take a Communication Science: Theory Pre-Test for analysis of information level concerning the subject area. A post-test will be administered to determine knowledge acquired and attitudes toward the subject area.

Students will evaluate their own progress in interactive feedback sessions. They will also evaluate the module content and the instructor with a Student Opinionnaire of Teaching.

This segment is part of the total module entitled Communication Science: Theory and Research. The module has been divided into two 3-unit segments: (1) Theory and (2) Research.

The total module is offered for 3 to 6 units. Students will be expected to complete at least 3 units during the first segment before preceding for further units of credit in this module.

A student enrolled in the Theory segment will receive 3 units of credit by demonstrating competency in thirty objectives. All students must demonstrate competency specifically in Objectives 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39 before individual units may be assigned.

With the exception of Objectives 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39, students may freely choose those objectives in which they would like to demonstrate competency. In addition, students have the option of re-writing or originating their own performance objectives for consideration for credit by the coordinator of the module. By whatever method is chosen, students must show competency in a total of 30 performance objectives which

Include Objectives 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39 stated above in this module description.

Learning Activities

There will be an initial two-hour meeting of all students enrolled in the module. The performance objectives of the module will be distributed and explained. Students will take a pre-test and provide information on their backgrounds and needs regarding Communication Science: Theory and Research.

Discussion seminars will be held regularly. Anyone may attend the regular seminars, but attendance is not required. Demonstration of competencies by students will be scheduled at various times during the session in which the module is offered.

Instructional Resources

1. Larry L. Barker and Robert J. Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior: Perspectives and Principles (Prentice-Hall, 1971).

2. Dean C. Barnland, Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies (Houghton-Mifflin, 1968).

3. John Waite Bowers, Designing the Communication Experiment (Random House, 1970)

4. Irwin D.J. Bross, "Models", Dimensions in Communication: Readings (Wadsworth, 1965), 10-25.

5. Theodore Clevenger, Jr. and Jack Matthews, The Speech Communication Process (Scott, Foresman, 1971).

6. Phillip Emmert and William D. Brooks, Methods of Research in Communication (Houghton-Mifflin, 1970).

7. Harold M. Kaplan, Anatomy and Physiology of Speech 2nd Ed. (McGraw-Hill, 1971).

8. Jerome B. Kernan, William P. Dommermuth, and Montrose S. Sommers, Promotion: An Introductory Analysis (McGraw-Hill, 1970).

9. Alfred G. Smith, Communication and Culture (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

10. Walter Wiesman, "Dimensions of Internal Organizational Communication," Communication-Spectrum '7 (National Society for the Study of Communication, 1968), 64-74.

11. Frederick Williams, Reasoning with Statistics: Simplified Examples in Communications Research (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

12. Philip Zimbardo and Ebbe E. Ebbeser, Influencing Attitudes and Changing Behavior (Addison-Wesley, 1969).

Special Resources (Objective 35)

1. Robert F. Bales, Personality and Interpersonal Behavior (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

2. Ray L. Birdwhistell, Kinesics and Context (Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1970).

3. Richard A. Gardner, Therapeutic Communication with Children (Science House, 1971).

4. Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (Fawcett, 1959).

5. Wendell Johnson, People in Quandaries (Harper and Row, 1946).

6. Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence (Free Press, Macmillan, 1955).

7. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Signet, 1964).

8. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is The Massage (Bantam, 1967).

9. Wilbur Schramm, Responsibility in Mass Communication, 2nd Ed. (Harper and Row, 1969).

10. Charles Van Riper, Speech Correction: Principles and Methods, 4th Ed. (Prentice-Hall, 1963).

(Other sources will be added as they become available in the library.)

The module description of Communication Science: Theory (above) provides the student with precise paremeters regarding the objectives of the course, the procedures for teaching and learning, the options for the student in terms of units enrolled and competencies to be demonstrated, and the materials (sources) for acquiring the knowledge at a mastery level.

The model for preparation of learning modules specifies for both professor and student the direction and intent of the course. By utilizing this approach both students and teachers eliminate the source for ambiguity of purpose and confusion of bases for evaluation that obscures learning and dissipates the time and energy of all concerned.

More importantly, it establishes a model of communication that is clearly defined in objective and operational terms. It clarifies the communication transaction between student and professor and allows for negotiation as well as objectivity in evaluation.

The end result of this systematization of the communicative learning procedure can only be higher-satisfaction of goals by both professor and student.

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Amidon, E.J. and E. Hunter (1966). Improving Teaching: Analyzing Verbal Interaction in the Classroom. New York: Holt.

Bellack, A.A., et al. (1966). The Language of the Classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Flanders, N.A. (1960. Teacher Influence, Pupil Attitudes and Achievement. University of Minnesota Press.

Lewis, G.L., et al. (1969). Teaching Speech. Columbia, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill.

Robinson, K.F. (1954). Teaching Speech in the Secondary School. New York: Longmans, Green.